

that small claims which insurance companies used to would pay, they will not do it any more. They will make the person take them to Small Claims Court, knowing that the person is entitled to the claim, but this is an impediment and perhaps designed to discourage a person from trying to seek claims...small ones against the insurance company. Since the defendant is the one who has the right to move the issue from Small Claims Court to District Court, the insurance company will wait until it is sued, which makes it the defendant, then it will make the person go through the Small Claims Court. It has been stated to me by a person who is a Judge, that there are companies which use the Small Claims Court, and although no attorney can be there, the representative from the company does have an advantage over the lay person who has the claim. So it is an insidious piece of legislation, not because of the motives of those who introduced it, but because of what the result would be. I do not think the jurisdictional amount of the Small Claims Court should be raised to a thousand dollars, even considering inflation. The most that should have been added would be two hundred and fifty dollars, which would have been seven hundred and fifty dollars, but the statistics that come from the court itself indicate that the majority of claims do not even reach the current five hundred dollar jurisdictional amount. Senator Beutler admitted that the only reason he brought the bill in is because his aunt had a claim from an auto accident, which could not be handled in Small Claims Court because of the jurisdictional amount. For you to alter the entire structure of the Court, to place an additional burden on people who must deal with insurance companies and loan companies, because Senator Beutler's aunt could not recover on a car accident, or get it before Small Claims, I think is not proper. And understand this, if her claim has already been processed, it can't go through Small Claims Court anyway. So the reason for doing this is not just, nor is it justified, and I'll listen to whatever the proponents of this bill have to say before I go further with it. But I think Senator Johnson had some of the same information brought to him that I had brought to me, and perhaps he dismisses it. But I would like him to deal with the aspect of the insurance companies now compelling people to sue them and go to Small Claims Court before being able to recover on these claims which the companies used to would pay, and if he considers the source questionable, then he could bring that out in his argument, but I accept it because I know how these agencies and companies will attempt to defeat legitimate claims and rights of citizens. Remember this, then I will be seated, the Small Claims Court is designed to settle...

SENATOR MARSH PRESIDING